

SENATE FISH AND GAME

EXHIBIT NO. 5

DATE 3/24/11

BILL NO. SB 400

Fax to: 444-4875

Sent 3-23-2011

Attn: Senate Fish & Game Committee
Secretary McCue

From: Mary Ellen Schnur
266-3515

Number of pages: 2, incl. this cover

MONTE'S GUIDING & MOUNTAIN OUTFITTING

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March 23, 2011

To: Members of the Senate Fish & Game Committee

Re: Clarify SB400 discussion

Members of the Committee:

As chair of Montana Outfitters and Guides Association Fish & Game Committee, I attended the SB400 hearing yesterday. I'd like to clarify some of the issues which came up in questions at the end of the hearing.

SB400 gives the hunter desiring a special public land hunting opportunity better odds of drawing a license, than if he were applying for one of the 17,000 general nonresident licenses. The license restricts the hunter to wilderness areas; it does not restrict or direct the hunter to a specific wilderness area.

A hunter must have a LICENSE before applying for a PERMIT. A permit allows a license holder to hunt in a specific district for a specific animal. Permits are issued to control the number of hunters and the amount of harvest in a particular district.

If, at some time, permits were required in a hunting district which contained a Congressionally designated wilderness, a hunter would have to hold a valid license, before applying for a permit. All applicants would be in the same drawing process as exists now for special permits.

The Forest Service controls outfitting in wilderness areas. The wilderness outfitters are tied to where they can camp and take their guests; they can't move their camp or hunting area. They are restricted to the number of days they can host guests in the wilderness; thus limiting the total number of hunters they can host. They can't book more hunters than their use days allow. If the outfitter doesn't have enough guests to fill his user days, he loses those days in the future.

When SB400 becomes law, nonresident hunters desiring a specialized wilderness hunt on their public land will have better odds of drawing a license. Wilderness outfitters will have greater assurance that they will have enough licensed guests to maintain their Forest Service permits.

Thank you for your hard work!
Monty Allen Schnur

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